A COMPASS TO DIRECT US

IC4LOP partnership’s recommendations on social inclusion and migrations
FRANCE VOLONTAIRES
France
www.france-volontaires.org

ZAVOD VOLUNTARIAT
Slovenia
www.zavod-voluntariat.si

CESIE
Italy
www.cesie.org

COMHLÁMH
Ireland
comhlamh.org
The project International Citizens for Local Perspectives (IC4LoP), an Erasmus+ KA3 social inclusion project, took place between 2019-2021. It worked to engage and mobilise young migrants, returned volunteers and others interested in global issues to participate in social justice collective action. IC4LoP involves four organisations from across Europe: CESIE (Italy), Comhlámh (Ireland), France Volontaires (France), and Zavod Voluntariat (Slovenia). As a starting point for this project, the consortium recognised the enormous capacity and further potential that young people with lived experience in other cultures have; and we have engaged groups of these young people to draw on these experiences to critically reflect on the root causes of global inequality and to identify ways forward.

The creation of the manual “Engagement and Activism of Young People” was the first step on this journey and looked at how to mobilise young people from different backgrounds and how to support their engagement in collective actions by going beyond the usual dynamics of helper/beneficiary. We ran a series of trainings on how to work with the manual, both at European and national levels, and these workshops provided opportunities for deeper reflection and thinking on global realities, on how we are working to marginalise young migrants and what needs to be done to address this exclusion. These trainings also provided time for adapting the content of the manual and for the rest of the IC4LoP project as a response to the Covid-19 health crisis.
THE CONTEXT

At a time when a significant number of people are migrating all around the world, including to Europe, the lack of a coordinated approach to migration across the EU, coupled with increasingly hostile responses to people arriving, has created a crisis of solidarity. The reasons why people leave their homes to start new lives in other countries are various and can range from war to climate change, political oppression, study, work, love, hunger, etc. However, the response to new people arriving has often been characterised by adverse reactions from the EU such as indifference, antipathy, aggression, and hatred. This has been manifested in ways that include attacks on migrant reception centres and camps, the criminalisation of search and rescue efforts in the Mediterranean, and increasingly hard borders.

As a consortium of organisations working on youth volunteering, we are deeply concerned about the “welcome crisis” people are encountering in Europe. We see a huge need for social justice and solidarity work across Europe, to confront such reactions and challenge the portrayal of migrants as beneficiaries of integration policies, rather than people with the same human rights as EU citizens. We also see a huge need for adequately resourced strategies and good practice approaches that will work to build inclusive and equal societies.

23 collective actions have been developed, organised and led by groups of very different young people within the 4 countries of the project. These collective actions included cooking workshops with refugees, an awareness raising picnic on the situation of Eritrean people seeking asylum in Slovenia, the setting up of an instagram account to address fake news, and a webinar on migration and other social justice topics. Young people that
participated in IC4LoP activities expressed the need for global solidarity and social justice more than ever.

To get more information on the IC4LoP project go to: https://action4inclusion.eu/partners/

The recommendations developed beneath have been designed for two main targets: policy-makers and organisations. They have been gathered from the numerous stakeholders involved at the various levels of IC4LoP during the collective actions, the evaluation report and the transnational event which included a dedicated workshop on developing recommendations. A bottom-up approach was favoured in the collection of these recommendations, so they would fit to the reality of both the people and the organisations we are working with at local, national and European level.
The importance of a stable living and social environment to foster the mobilisation of young people from different backgrounds has been pointed out by a great number of stakeholders throughout the project. Guaranteeing the respect of everyone’s human rights is the first condition to provide this stable environment. EU member states have the duty to protect the fundamental rights of individuals under a number of different frameworks including the Universal Declaration of Human’s rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951). This human rights based approach is fundamental to ensuring the social inclusion and dignity of migrants and migrant groups, including asylum seekers and refugees.
RESPECT FOR HUMANS RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

» Provide a stable environment to foster inclusion and engagement by guaranteeing the respect of everyone’s human rights;

» Welcome asylum seekers in a dignified manner, ensuring they are treated fairly and that their case is examined under uniform standards which protect their dignity;
» Enhance awareness among young people of their fundamental rights and sense of belonging to society;

» Facilitate freedom of movement as it is one of the fundamental human rights.

LET MIGRANT’S VOICES BE HEARD!

INCLUDE AND REPRESENT

» Increase diversity and adopt an intergenerational approach in policy-making processes;

» Recognise and value the voices of migrants and young people as experts of their own experiences;
» Include and involve migrant-led groups and organisations in policy-making spaces;

» Support political participation for migrants by positive action measures;

» Develop policies to empower migrants to be actors in decision-making processes and not always be seen as victims or beneficiaries;

CHALLENGE THE NARRATIVES AND FIGHT DISCRIMINATION

» Fight stereotypes, prejudices and structural racism by supporting young people’s engagement in active practices of non-discrimination and intercultural
dialogue;

» Address migrations as opportunities for our societies and not as a problem: living in an intercultural world leads to better understanding of global interconnections and interdependence, supports the development of resilience and adaptations to global issues; and builds respect and equality;

» Promote the use of a common and respectful terminology on migrations in media narratives and representations by bringing to light practical interventions and evidence based knowledge on what is happening in the world;

» EU Commission should stop labelling people: the requirement to categorise people by target groups has potential discriminatory effects in the way we work to engage and involve people in Erasmus + programmes. Labels do not represent the diversity of identities an individual or a group can have. A person can be a refugee, a professional, a volunteer and a stakeholder. The number based and target group approaches have to be reviewed. A new approach to capturing outcomes and engagement with the work need to be explored.
SUPPORT TO MIGRANT-LED ORGANISATIONS

» Support the involvement of migrant-led organisations and activist groups providing them with opportunities and resources to develop their own skills and knowledge and access to long-term and structural fundings in order to bring the migrant community to a stronger, structured level that can be independent and advocate for themselves on their situations and actions;
VOLUNTEERING AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

» Develop public policies for international solidarity, interculturalism and inclusion of people’s multiple backgrounds and experiences;

» Create a volunteer path, from informal volunteering to formal volunteering to foster active citizenship for all by developing policies, promoting the commitment of young people in their social and professional integration journey and resourcing with dedicated mechanisms - such as reciprocal programmes for young volunteers, development education initiatives and “collective learning” passports.
» Ensure proper material conditions for young people who get involved so volunteering doesn’t come as a cost and is accessible to everyone;

**STRONG PARTNERSHIPS**

» Develop conditions to foster strong partnerships at various levels and with organisations working in different fields;

» Recognise volunteer, social justice and migrant-led organisations as legitimate actors for the construction of public policies;

» The EU Commission should provide access to funding on a long-term basis for the building of programmes and partnerships: it takes time to build sustainable and inclusive actions.
START LOCAL, GO GLOBAL!
A GRASSROOT LEVEL APPROACH

» Support local initiatives and grassroot organisations: local actions are a good start for encouraging and increasing local and global perspectives for young people with fewer opportunities as they effectively build relationships and sustainable initiatives;

» Provide resources to connect local initiatives at national and European level to exchange experiences and knowledge;

» Get inspired and value the work and collaboration at local and community level as community relationships are key to fostering social inclusion and respect for diversity
We hope these recommendations will support organisations to work with young people from different backgrounds to create collaborative responses to the issues we are facing at local, national and global levels. The recommendations cover organisational policies and programming, partnership building and training - but most importantly highlight the need for the voices and leadership of young people within organisations and externally within policy-making and direct political representation. Above all we recommend that the first step in all of the work with young people is to start from a place of compassion, to focus on creating safe spaces for all to speak and share their experiences and opinions and to identify ways in which the dominant narrative around migrations can and should be different.

We have also developed a training manual which will support you in your work. The manual aims to build trainers’ and facilitators’ capacity to engage with young people, including international volunteers and migrants; and to plan and run collective actions on the global justice issues they are passionate about.
WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER!

BUILDING PARTNERSHIP AND NETWORKS

Organisations should adopt an open cooperative approach to foster strong partnerships at local, national and international levels; and with organisations working in different fields. Partnerships should be based on trust and relationship building to support sustainable networks including at grassroots level.

As a priority, organisations should:

» Work to build partnerships with migrant led groups and associations to ensure that migrants voices are amplified and heard; and that the nature of any collaboration is led by migrants themselves.
» Work to strengthen links with unions and other civil society organisations active on issues of social justice, youth and international migration; and develop partnerships with institutional actors (public authorities and academic actors).

» Encourage individual employees or volunteers to attend networking events, even if they are not specifically connected to their field. This creates spaces for organisations, which are not used to working together to connect and share a common agenda.

» Target migrant groups and associations through outreach as they may not be part of established networks; and also target specific groups within migrant communities to work towards inclusion of all - for example LGBTQI+. 
BE ANTIRACIST!

ANTI-RACISM AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

All employees and volunteers should take part in anti-racism training which can be facilitated by migrant-led organisations. Anti-racism training should address the reasons for migrations, issues of power and power dynamics, colonialism, historical legacies and current global structural inequalities along with key information on asylum processes and migrant rights. The training should also work to build empathy and compassion. This will enable organisations to work in solidarity and be an ally and to amplify the migrant and asylum seeker message.
START LOCAL TO GO GLOBAL!

SUPPORTING ACTION AND ACTIVISM

Support employees, volunteers, members and communities to take action and connect their existing initiatives. They will have a better chance at succeeding in the local dimensions. This allows for social and community diversity encounters, is a good way to promote tolerance and ensures sustainability. Remember, it takes time to build sustainable and inclusive actions. These local actions with a global focus can also support youth to start increasing their local and global perspective. Recognise and value the voices of young people in this process as experts - not only for testifying!
CREATE INCLUSIVE GROUPS AND PROGRAMMES!

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

How can we ensure that the groups we are working with are as welcoming and accessible as possible, for people from a wide diversity of backgrounds? What might be some of the barriers that might exclude people from taking part in our activities? How can we make our spaces safe and more inclusive? How can we reach out to particularly excluded groups?

WHO WILL SEE OUR INVITATION?

Newcomers may not have established networks or may be living in isolated conditions, where they do not have access to information about activities that are taking place. It is important to consider how and where we advertise events, potentially outside of our usual networks.
DOES EVERYONE SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE?

Some people in the process of learning the language of their host country can feel that their lack of fluency is a barrier to participation. Suggested solutions include encouraging other group members to translate, and factoring time for this process into all activities.

WHAT ARE THE REAL COSTS?

There are hidden costs of participation that you might not think about, especially if activities are taking place over several weeks or months. These include transport costs, childcare or other caring roles, and food. It is important to think about how these might affect people’s ability to get involved and to let them know from the outset if the group or project are in a position to cover these.

ARE CHILDREN WELCOME?

If you are in a position to welcome children or other dependents to group meetings and activities, this may make the difference between someone being able to participate, or not.

IS THE VENUE ACCESSIBLE?

Here, issues to consider include how linked the venue is to public transport, for those who do not have cars, as well as whether the building is accessible for people with disabilities.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO MEET?

It is important to consider different options when arranging meetings, to make them as accessible as possible for people with family, work, study and other commitments. If someone will be participating in the scope of their work - mornings are better. If
it’s a free time activity - think afternoons, when people are back from work and school.

GET POLITICAL!

SUPPORT MIGRANTS TO GET INVOLVED IN DECISION MAKING IN POLITICAL SPACES

Organisations should support migrants and migrant groups to get involved in policy making and to be recognised and considered legitimate actors in the co-construction of public policy. This requires acting as an ally, working in solidarity and overcoming the helper/beneficiary dynamics occurring between individuals or organisations.

Organisations should support peer to peer approaches - migrant organisations supporting other migrant groups to propose alternatives, have more responsibilities and to take action.
LEAD WITH A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE!

SUPPORTING MIGRANTS TO BE LEADERS IN THE ORGANISATION

Change the culture and policies of organisations so that it is an environment which effectively facilitates migrants to be leaders and actors for change. A first step is to start from a place of compassion to create safe spaces for all to speak and share their experiences and opinions. There will be further and possible structural inequalities existing in and external to the organisation which will need to be addressed but creating safe spaces is essential for supporting social inclusion.